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FAVORED BECKFORD RALLIES TO WIN OPENING-NIGHT WILLIAM WALKER

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, April 28, 2018) – Newtown Anner Stud's **Beckford (GB)** rallied from far back in the stretch to run down pace-setter **Salmanazar** by three-quarters of a length to win the fourth running of the \$100,000 William Walker Presented by GE Appliances for 3-year-olds in front of a crowd of 22,023 on Opening Night presented by Budweiser to kick off the 38-day Spring Meet.

Trained by **Brendan Walsh** and ridden by **Julien Leparoux**, Beckford covered the five furlongs on a firm Matt Winn Turf Course in :57.28.

A Group II winner in Ireland last year, Beckford was making his first start since finishing fifth in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (GI) behind **Mendelssohn**. Beckford is a son of Bated Breath (GB) out of the Danehill Dancer (IRE) mare Whirly Dancer (GB).

The victory was worth \$60,140 and increased his earnings to \$328,380 with a record of 7-3-2-0.

Sent off as the favorite in the field of eight, Beckford returned \$5, \$3.40 and \$2.60. **Salmanazar**, ridden by **Corey Lanerie**, returned \$4 and \$2.60 with **Masked** finishing another 2 ½ lengths back in third under **Shaun Bridgmohan** and paying \$2.60 to show.

It was another 2 ½ lengths back to **I'm Corfu** with **Vitsal**, **Elusive Mischief**, **Pure Shot** and **Drena's Star** following in order.

Racing resumes Tuesday with a nine-race program that begins at 12:45 p.m. (all times Eastern).

WILLIAM WALKER QUOTES

Julien Leparoux (Jockey, Beckford, winner) – "He's a very fast horse. I knew he needed a target in front of him so we sat off the pace in a good spot around the turn and he flew home. I think he is going to have a very bright future ahead of him. Brendan and his team did a very nice job with him."

Brendan Walsh (Trainer, Beckford, winner) – "We thought he was a special horse when we first got him. Just by simply looking at his past performances he ran some very nice races as a 2-year-old. He does his best running with a target in front of him. We'll probably regroup and see how he comes out of this race to determine a plan for him the rest of the year."

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